

# The Labour Organiser

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## The UNIONS and the CANDIDATES

**We put a new point of view**

A good deal of uninformed criticism and correspondence has lately appeared in the *Daily Herald* concerning the selection and financing of Labour candidates. As might be expected, most correspondents appeared only to see the aspects of their own particular case, and a broad understanding of the whole situation would be difficult to gather from either the protagonists of this correspondence, or of the hue and cry which succeeded.

In the Labour Party there are two methods by which elections are financed:—

- (a) Out of funds of financing Trade Unions in varying amounts up to the limit allowed by the Hastings Decisions.
- (b) Out of funds or money raised by the D.L.P., assisted sometimes, but not commonly, by the donations of the candidate. In a comparatively small number of cases the candidate finances the election similarly and under the same conditions as a Trade Union.

Now the first question is not whether these practices are ideal or desirable, but whether it is practicable to change them. We are miles, as yet, from a common pool, even if there were no objections to such a procedure. One objection we can think of is that the administrators of the funds would soon be charged on some hands with the taint of Tammany.

In the many jealousies inevitable in our present or in any system, it is often

overlooked that there is a levelling up process for D.L.P.s who bear the financial responsibilities of a contest, in as much as they, and only they, benefit by a distribution of election funds centrally raised and administered by the Party.

The system in force, therefore, has much to commend it; that the central fund is not substantial enough for its purpose is a circumstance that could be remedied if there was greater loyalty and less jealousy all round.

Nobody can truthfully say that our present system could be bettered in the present stage of our Party, but are the abuses which are alleged really substantial?

Objection is taken to a Trade Union looking for a "good" constituency (as if individuals don't!); that having bought a constituency the Union claims an interest in it thereafter, and that because of its funds it is able to pick and choose and even to "place" quite unsuited men as candidates. As to Trade Union interest in a constituency is it not reasonable that Trade Union money should be spent to the best effect? And is it not equally reasonable that having spent, possibly, thousands of pounds in a division some return should be looked for by the Union Executive?

The Editor, with an experience which at one time was unique as to the number of selection conferences attended, refutes entirely many allegations which have been thrown broadcast in this controversy.

Again and again constituencies have been noted to reject quite tempting sums with which certain candidates could be financed, in favour of someone who had no financial backing at all. We reject too, as grossly untrue, the allegation that Parties are bought by Trade Unions or anybody else, and the occasional instance which we, ourselves, could quote is not at all characteristic of the majority.

More and more D.L.P.s are taking financial responsibility into their own hands and to allege what has just been controverted is to libel our own Movement and to deny the existence of the fine spirit of sacrifice which is abundantly existent in most Selection Conferences.

Trade Union "old fossils" do not "get away" with constituencies just because of Union money. If old fossils are selected at all, maybe, it is because the brains of the Movement lie there, and because our Movement has not learnt in time, and years ago, the lesson of getting hold of the young. We refer to this elsewhere.

These controversies do not help the Party. They injure and destroy its spirit. It would be far better to concentrate on making the best we can out of our present compromise system; and to help in this, there should be a remembrance that our Party is, in essence, still an alliance of Trade Unions and individually admitted persons. That fact alone calls for common sense and a forbearance from charges that cannot be proved.

## TRADES COUNCIL NEWS

Following a resolution carried at the last Annual Conference of Trades Councils the T.U.C. has now arranged for elections to the Trades Councils' Joint Consultative Committee to be upon a regional basis and for the members to be elected, one for each of six regions.

In mapping out these regions some adjustments have been necessary and in a few instances Trades Councils have been removed from one Federation to another in order that the strength and size of each region may approximate, as near as may be, to the others. The regions and Federations comprising them are as follows:—

Region	Federations	
No. 1	Cumberland and Westmorland ; North-Eastern ; Tees-Side ; Yorkshire.	
No. 2	Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales.	
No. 3	South Midland, North Midland, Midland.	North
No. 4	Eastern Counties, Home Counties, Sussex, Surrey, Hants, I.O.W. and Dorset.	
No. 5	London, Kent, Essex	
No. 6	Monmouth, Glamorgan, Carmarthen, South-Western (Exeter and Bristol Groups).	

Under the new arrangement each Trades Council will be entitled to submit a nomination and will have one vote. The ballot papers will be issued by the T.U.C., but each Federation may appoint a scrutineer. The number of scrutineers it appears will vary according to the region.

Trades Councils will require to note that when they make a nomination such person must thereafter be their delegate to the Annual Conference provided a delegate is sent. We note that canvassing on behalf of any candidate in the regional election will be disqualified.

The Stafford Trades Council has, as a result of a dispute regarding a Communist delegate, been "removed from the list" by the T.U.C. This is equivalent to disaffiliation under the Labour Party Rules.

The Chatham Trades Council which was disbanded some time ago for similar reasons to above has been replaced by the Medway Towns' Trades Council which covers a wide area.

We note that the Acton Labour Party has now formed an industrial section and will function in future as the Acton Trades Council and Labour Party.

## URGENT

Will readers who have copies of last issue to spare, please post at once to the Editor—also No. 234.

These issues are sold right out and the demand continues. Full allowance made.

Other back copies are not required.

## FILMS

We note that at the request of the Workers' Film Association and to meet the urgent demands of Trade Union and Co-operative Organisations, the Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council of the Labour Party are to organise a Film Conference and exhibition at Manchester on February 14th.

This should prove a particularly useful function and bring the value of the film as a means for education and propaganda before an important and populous area, from which much should be reaped later on in the way of increased use of available films and other services.

Mr. George Ridley, M.P., is to take the Chair, and Ald. Joseph Reeves is to introduce the films and impart the services available.

The following films will also be shown:—

- “The Builders” (one reel).
- “Advanced Democracy.”
- “The First W.F.A. News Reel.”
- “Youth.”
- “Palace of Wonders.”
- “Hitler’s Dream.”
- “Four Incidents in a Telegraph Office.”
- “Local Counter Attack.”

## SAVING PAPER

There are many local Labour Parties where dumps of old literature exist. With the present campaign for salvage these dumps, long eye-sores and dust collectors, may, however, be cleared out too readily. Quite a lot of this old stuff will be found to be printed on one side only and it is waste, not national economy, to send such matter to be pulped. Most old leaflets and similar matter which have been printed on one side only could be sent to the printer as required for re-use and for printing on the blank side. In such cases some such matter as the following could be printed in a panel, thus providing a lead to the recipient and making a little capital out of the situation.

### PAPER SHORTAGE

In order not to waste paper we have printed this leaflet on old stock. Please follow our example and after reading place in your waste paper receptacle for collection. Please note carefully our message beforehand.

## Labour Party Directory—D.L.P. Alterations

### *Index Description*

### *No. Division Name of Organisation*

D9 CD Buckingham D.L.P.

D134 CD Canterbury D.L.P.

E274 BD Balham and Tooting D.L.P.

E281/2 DB Woolwich B.L.P.

C393 BD Edgbaston D.L.P.

C397 BD Ladywood D.L.P.

A458 CD Doncaster D.L.P.

H503 CD Abertillery D.L.P.

J562 BD Edinburgh North D.L.P.

J577 SB Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth D.L.P.

### *Present Secretary and Address*

Mr. LEE, 31 Victoria Street, Wolverton, Bletchley, Bucks.

Mr. J. E. FENN, 23 St. Peters Grove, Canterbury, Kent.

Mr. W. HEDLEY, 12 Balham Park Road, London, S.W.12.

Coun. Miss M. CROUT, 3 New Road, Woolwich, London, S.E.18.

Mr. G. COOPER, 25 Beaufort Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 16.

Mrs. R. CROWDER, 35 Cape Street, Ladywood, Birmingham, 16.

Mr. M. E. EMMERSON, Trades Institute, 7 Northbridge Road, Doncaster.

Mr. L. HILL, 66 Newall Street, Abertillery, Mon.

Mr. J. FARQUARSON, 45 Silverknowles Drive, Davidson's Mains, Edinburgh, 4.

Mr. J. MCKENNY, 30 Kennard Street, Falkirk, Stirlings.

# Is the Labour Party Growing Old?

The above query forms the subject of a recent article in *Labour Discussion Notes*, issued by the Socialist Clarity Group.

Our first comment must be that if the answer is yes (and figures supplied by the Oxford University Democratic Social Club prove it to be so) then that is not the fault of the *Labour Organiser*! This paper was the first to issue a warning many years ago and point the remedy.

The *Labour Organiser* has consistently, in season and out of season, pointed to the evil and the cure. Once again we say that, if we are not to be, not so much a *youth Party*, as a *representative Party* of all ages and all citizens, we have got to begin at the beginning; to cater for the young mind, and not only for what is popularly known as Youth. We have got to begin where the other parties long ago began: that is, to start with the *children*, and provide Socialist training and organisation actually before the adolescent mind arrives.

Reports published in our last issue show that the average of our Youth Sections is getting lower, but then these sections are so few, and though the tendency is there, the nett result is but a drop in the ocean.

*Labour Discussion Notes* do not deal so much with the problem with which we are most concerned, *viz.* the average age of the rank and file of the Party and of the Movement in the country. The figures given apply more to the leadership of the Party and its officialdom. These are, however, but a reflection of a wider and even more distressing phenomena—the phenomenon to which we have pointed so often and under which lies the real disease.

*Labour Discussion Notes* points out that the number of Labour M.P.s over 70 has increased from two in 1923 to twenty-two in 1941, while the number of Labour M.P.s under 40 has decreased from thirty to five in the same period. Of sixteen Labour M.P.s elected since the beginning of the war only two have been under fifty years of age, and since

1931 only ten Labour M.P.s under forty have been elected.

At this moment there are only twenty-four Labour M.P.s under fifty and there are forty-five over sixty-five. It is stated, though on what authority we do not know, that of forty-five Labour M.P.s over sixty-five only six have so far announced that they intend to retire at the next General Election.

Comparisons are made with the Conservative Party which, by contrast, comes out favourably, but to our mind that matter is not of so much import as the question whether the whole of the facts and evidence do not indicate a wide-spread divorce of young people from active participation in politics, with all the possibilities which this condition may entail.

But here let us enter a *caveat* against conclusions that will inevitably and quite wrongly be drawn. We decline to accept the sweeping theorem that all these aged M.P.s who should be cleared out so that their places should be filled by young men (and women).

The question arises when is a man too old for his job—this sort of job. And that is not a question of anno domini. It is a pathological, biological and physiological one. History abounds with instances of men of vigour and youthful outlook and of intense activity and staying power, whose ages were far beyond any of those who come into this consideration. There are such men alive to-day.

But we are not going to pretend that this is true in any substantial degree here: indeed we think there is abundant evidence to believe otherwise, but we persist, that if we are to judge this matter by age alone we shall judge wrongly, and do injustice to a number who serve us well.

The real issue is *where are the men to take their places?* Really eligible young candidates are scarce, and we say that however it may offend the conceit of some of them. Neither can the Party get capable young organisers —there is a shocking scarcity, as we can prove if this was the place for it.

(Concluded on page 8.)

# MEMBERSHIP HINTS

## A TARGET FOR 1942

Considerable evidence reaches us that throughout the country there is going to be a determined effort to raise the membership figures of the Party, to which matter and kindred subjects we paid much attention last month.

First mention must be made of Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council, which has already kicked off with a great campaign and a "target for 1942," which will entail the raising of membership figures in the area by approximately 20 per cent. this year.

The campaign starts by the enlistment of all the very considerable forces attached to the Regional Council and the help of every one of them, including Labour Groups on public bodies.

A forceful printed circular with a diagrammatic illustration of the target for 1942 has been accompanied by equally forceful circulars to all the interested bodies, and this, of course, is to be followed up by appropriate endeavours which man-power, influence and advice will supply.

We cannot believe that our Party will lie down to the retrogression which has persisted since the war began. The above is a healthy sign and it does not stand alone, as our next issue will show.

## HALIFAX INCREASES and how it's done

Parties which have not suffered really seriously from the war but who are down in the dumps and feel that nothing much can be done to hold, and increase, the individual membership of Divisional Parties, should go to Halifax and catch something of the spirit existing within the Halifax Party.

The Agent, Miss Sara Barker, has given able direction to the Halifax Party during the past few years, and it has set up a still higher record for membership during 1941 by making 512 new members during the year. In 1940 the membership was 1,557 but

during 1941 there proved to be a wastage of approximately 200 so a *net increase* of 312 members is recorded. In addition to the numerical increase the actual membership *income* exceeds £300 for 1941, compared with £248 for 1940. Halifax has more individual members than any Party in the North-Eastern District, and its efforts are indeed a friendly challenge to all other Divisional Parties in the Counties of Durham, Northumberland and Yorkshire.

Readers will ask how it is done, and the truthful answer is the simple one—by the consistent hard work of a few keen members and officers. Notwithstanding war-time difficulties, campaigns were planned to take place in those parts of the constituency likely to give good results; and squads of canvassers did the job. Supplementing this work the Party's 'secret of success' has been its consistent effort to keep the members together by all kinds of social, educational and propaganda activity.

The subscriptions of over 800 members are at present collected by one member who works on a commission basis, and payment works out at about £1 per week, including a special commission on new members enrolled, and the Party is likely to consider appointing other Collectors on this basis. The problem of collecting has also been simplified, to some extent, by getting members to pay their subscription either monthly or quarterly, thus relieving the Collector of making a large number of calls.

Canvassing for new members is done by the Canvassing Squad and not usually by the Collector since his time is too valuable. After the first subscriptions are collected the names of new members are transferred to the Collector's books.

Preliminary plans are in hand for the year 1942 and since last year's campaign, spread over from March to September, was conducted on a door to door basis, the New Year will see an endeavour to increase the individual membership of the Party from *within the Trades Union Branches*.

Halifax shows that the job can be done, and where there's a will

there's a way. Yes, go to Halifax for inspiration!

*Miss Sara Barker, the Halifax Agent, writes:—*

"I want to make it perfectly clear that the results we have had here would never have been possible had it not been for a small but loyal band of workers, together with the help our splendid Collector has given. We have never done much at once, but our effort commenced in March and finished at the end of September. We did small sections each week, choosing out the best sections in each ward, and our best results have not been from the poorest sections.

My own feelings on the question of membership campaigning are, that the best results will be obtained by quiet but persistent methods, and whether we like it or not, war conditions will force us to turn more to the collector on a commission basis than by relying purely on voluntary workers. With the best will in the world, they cannot do it owing to the heavy demands upon their time, and I contend that what free time they have is better devoted to getting the new members which can then be transferred to the collector's books."

### Is the Labour Party Growing Old ?

(Concluded from page 6.)

The true fact is that the position which *Labour Discussion Notes* deplores and so ably presents, is due to unnatural growth—to the non-assimilation of young blood in sufficient quantities and at the proper time. If the young hordes had been trained and enlisted with us long ago, all the figures would have borne a different relation; and, what is more, natural political causes and effects would have led to the retirement of many of the older men whose abilities and youthfulness are not so well established.

Anyway, this is our answer to the question asked. It is not too late for our Party to begin where it should have begun years ago: but the time is approaching when "too late" may be written on the portals. And what then?

# YOUTH:

Although much we said last month might bear repetition we find ourselves constrained in this issue to give an example of how a League of Youth Branch should be run, and of the efforts that can be made by the senior Party to aid its efforts. The honour belongs to Kettering.

We have before us No. 1 of the Kettering League of Youth News Bulletin; a foolscap duplicated sheet with eight write-ups. From this we gather that membership of the Section is going up. There were a dozen new members last month. The Section has started a lending library and they appeal to friends for books. We ourselves have responded and we hope the selection we have sent them will be of service.

At the annual meeting there was a record attendance of 30 and a good feature was the competition to fill the offices. Meetings are held every Friday and they are keen. There is some hope of Branches being formed in nearby towns. The League has been busy at a Party Conference in selling literature and they sold out.

We note that both lectures and social evenings (with dance) are among recent activities and a nice little sum was made by an affair on January 16th.

Originality is shown by an item booked for January 30th entitled: "Round the World in Thirty Minutes." Five members are to give short speeches on the international situation, after which, of course—well we hope so—the world will settle down again. The News Bulletin is bright and breezy.

From the same Constituency comes a copy of an appeal made by the Borough Labour Party to Labour parents. It is pointed out how many eligibles there are in Labour homes who could join the League; and this publicity and its appeal for aid and further advice to parents to lay the matter before their sons and daughters is both timely and profitable.

*By the Editor**Love and Hate*

# The Wanderlust

No. 15 (Concluded)

John Ginsell Jones was a modern young man, and by that token he was slovenly dressed. The thing about him which did speak of care and attention was his jet-black hair, brushed back from the forehead; the well-oiled strands of which always seemed to stand up (or lie down, if that is better), to all the exertions of the day.

In manner John was abrupt, almost to the point of rudeness; for were not the politenesses and pretences of Georgian and Edwardian days but the veneer of decadence? In his attitude to the other sex, John was no different; with them, he stood for equality, hard to stand for nowadays, but an advance, perhaps, on bygone simulation and servility. The man, anyway, was frank, open, and at ease in the company of ladies.

Nora, Dora, Cora and Clare were sisters. The quartet were as modern as they make them. They wore slacks and jumpers; smoked "fags"; sipped cocktails and read pocket magazines, made that size in order that men and maids might quickly hide the illustrations.

The ladies, 19, 20, 21, and 22, respectively, were like John. They too were frank. A man might talk with them, and it would be understood that each understood—all, in fact, which there was to be understood. Sophisticated, they were so immeasurably knowledgeable in the ways of the world, and of mankind, that life to them was very simple. There was woman—the ego, and ergo there was man; an unscriptural proposition, and one, we confess, we should put the other way round.

With all this said Nora, Dora, Cora and Clare were nice girls, though they wouldn't fill a story book with sentiment, they *would* fill a man (and themselves) with good food: which is sensible. Further, they frequently filled Mr. Jones little car to overflowing with jollity and jam as John expressed it. Nice girls have nice tastes, and

John was one of them. By which hangs a tale.

\* \* \*

"Damn!"

A helpful expression. Like lancing a gumboil, it relieves the feelings. Nora uttered it, but Dora said *worse*. And while Cora cursed, Clare crimed—on—*at* Nora, Dora and Cora—at the car (which was red already)—and at fate at large. Young-ladyish, modern young-ladyish, of course, but perfectly useless in the circumstances.

It happened this way. At D—the village street is bordered by a wide, but shallow, stream. The girls had borrowed the car and tooling down the road they were not to know the steering was broken and that John's copperwire wouldn't last forever.

There was a sudden lurch to the right, four squeals, a bang, a wrench, a splash: by which time the car was marooned in midstream, with four angry, but by no means frightened, ladies still in it. The language, which had begun the other side of the road, continued during the passage, Clare's grand finale being simultaneous with the descent of the disturbed waters on to pants, pantees and slacks, or whatever it is that modern women's imitative impedimenta is known as.

\* \* \*

Men may be inferior beings, but they're there in an emergency. Where John came from I don't know, but that bang would have fetched him from his grave had he been buried in the nearby churchyard.

John dashed in and with strong arms each clinging maiden was dumped on shore. Then with his powerful grip John wrought a miracle on the car. Wings and bonnet came back to shape, the radiator stood upright once again, and with a shove and a shout the car followed the girls. The little T.U.B. so rightly named, was soon ready for the road, its honourable scars but a tribute to its owner.

We must stop now to record the exact time and date. It was Sunday,

September 3rd, 1939, and 10.30 a.m. as the "little red devil" drove away.

\* \* \*

Behold, shortly afterwards, four maids and a man, duly bathed and clothed, and in their right minds: in their right raiment too, for the girls were in frocks and the man wore a suit for Sundays, which was fathers. In striped trousers, lounge coat and starched collar, John looked, as did all the others, quite the better for the change.

John had some chaff to face regarding his little T.U.B., and the ladies gave him little peace. It was Nora, who presently said rather wickedly, "John you'll have to marry us now!"

"Quite imposs," retorted that radiant God. "Quite imposs. But I'd do it if they'd let me!"

It was Clare's turn. "Now, John," she said "Don't be greedy, or a sheik. You'll have to leave three anyway for others. So who's your choice?"

Thus challenged John took refuge in the sideboard and passed round the necessaries. Presently he said "Good companions! Listen to this: I'm a free man. I haven't proposed to anybody—yet. But now you ask me I'll swear I'll marry *one* of you!" And with that he turned and left the room, to the cheers, yes, and the blushes, of four modern girls who hadn't expected that answer.

John was gone a long time. When he came back his face was grave. Cora, of the curly hair, greeted him, "Is it I, John?" she teased "and is that why you look so glum?" John turned, "Girls," he said, "England's declared war!"

Each one got up to go, for each had settled on a course and the party broke up. John, however, as he was leaving turned to say "Goodbye, girls," and as an after-thought he added "but remember this! that threat still stands. But after the war."

And like all girls, ancient or modern, each experienced an empty feeling, and an ache at the heart as the little T.U.B. clanked away.

\* \* \*

On the beach at Dunkirk, and far beyond, a thin brown-black line stretches out, thicker here and there, and moving about like ants. From above it looked like seaweed: but no, a line of seaweed doesn't show up like that. And the gunners know.

Here's someone we know, a tall and yet unsoldierly figure with a bandage round his head to cover a

detached eyebrow and an empty socket. That hellish beach means one more: left leg this time. John was for going back till that one took him. Going back to look for Cora. Cora of the curly hair.

But there was no going back at Dunkirk. Way back there were still field hospitals patching up the wounded and packing up for transport. Cora was in one of them, but hospitals must take their chance, and orders still were orders.

What happened? John doesn't know, well, perhaps he doesn't; or you or I. That hospital caught it; and none were left to tell the tale. Cora, Cora of the curly hair, was there, the modern girl, blasé, sophisticated, she who asked, with a new meaning the ancient question "Is it I?" Let us join our prayers that the end was merciful—though our prayers won't matter much, like the prayers that both sides make in war. God waits to see the markings on the planes.

It is hard to say which was the worst horror, the beach or the boat, what with pain and wretchedness, the hours of inattention and dive-bombing, of overwrought mind and soul, John needed sleep, or an anesthetic, but there wasn't any; only pain.

\* \* \*

Other waters, other ways. This is the Atlantic; sound ship; great company; brave men, women and children. Do they realise, I wonder?

Here's an acquaintance. Good for Nora, so natty in her ship's uniform. Modern girl, calm, collected, debonair.

People talk of the Atlantic swell, or of gales, but the big broad pond, always more pacific than its ill-named sister, shines like glass in its better humours. It is still and smooth to-day and the thump, thump, thump, of the engines, the haze of heat and the gurgle of passing waters give no sign of the perils underneath.

It was on this scene that a periscope broke water. For some moments only the bridge and a few others knew. The thump, thump, thump, changed time: it became thump, thump, thumpity, thump, thump, thump; thump. Excitement spreads. The submarine has surfaced. A streak speeds across the waters, a miss, but panic now, or there would be but for Nora, and others like her, and the calmness of the crew.

Another streak. Ah—God—a hit—hit—Lord, it's all up! The boats!—

captain's command, echoed above the din. The thumping stops. A gun fires—Gad, another hit—we're going down—boats ! boats !! boats !!!

Draw the veil, author. Eye mustn't see this horror, nor note God's love for little children. Fine day, we say in England. Fine day for death and doom in bloodied waters ! Calm will come again presently and no marks upon the ocean will bear witness of the meal : for the belly of the Atlantic never *will* be sated, nor men's wickedness.

Pray for those who knew no better, pray for the children, pray for Nora—but, by Gad, what in hell is the use ?

\* \* \*

There is quiet now, "brave" men go home for their applause, and for their medals. Ugh !

\* \* \*

This is LONDON—City of joys ; city of sorrow ; city of pride, of squalor, of wealth, of crime, of power, of hopelessness, of ambition and despair.

These attributes are strangely mixed now—the night of the great destruction.

Suddenly the sky belches fire ; the hell of sound begins. The fires fall from above in hundreds, nay, in thousands, in tens of thousands ; there are screeches bangs, deep-throated, heavy booms. Like shooting stars the evil engines sweep across the roof of London ; the searchlight catches them. Great guns shake the earth ; in the air the winged devils cross and cris-cross, ceaselessly and ever the fire descends ; blast follows blast in endless roar, but still fire falls and the flames reach upward. Armageddon, the hells and horrors of Revelation ?

Men fight back—a seeming hopeless task while building after building fires or falls. Brave deeds are done, and forgotten, for the doers die and are buried in the debris. Blood and sweat pour out but no tears : there is no time for tears—yet. The orgie of hell lasts on, it swells louder and louder yet, till at last the tumult dies and only fires burn, while humans, who are super-human now, fight on and on, in a blazing bath of flame and fury.

\* \* \*

Away somewhat from the vortex, in a crowded shelter, Dora is on duty. The early songs have died down. Away at the end a new-born baby squeals his first appreciation of life. The seats are crowded and men and women sit upon each others laps ; the children also, or

upon the now disgusting floor. Some of both sexes have retched and the stench is cruel. One man calmly eats his sandwiches, others have bottles ; some cry, some laugh, many talk, and amid the episodes, some attempt is made to control the lavatory.

"Hark, that was a near one !" someone says "and that'un," says another, as the whole place shakes as from a subterranean violence. "Blimey," says another, "look out—." The sentence wasn't finished. A vast intruder shone for one instant and—

No human eye caught the disappearing and dissolved fragments as they scattered into nothingness. How, on Judgment Day they will piece the persons, God above knows, but the noble Dora will be there to witness.

\* \* \*

Down by the stream that runs by the side of the village street, a man and a maid lean on the rails and watch the rippling waters.

Here is John with a lamed leg and an eyeshade holding down an artificial eyebrow the while it hides from sight his empty orb. Clare, by his side, looks older now, but she is still his junior. Like her sisters Clare had donned a nurse's uniform at the beginning of war, but she had stayed at home, the heavenly light in a dark hard-hit village.

John was smiling now for love always smiles through. "Care," he said, it was a nickname he gave her, "remember that morning ? That threat I made ? There's only you now, so what about it ?"

It was a proposal, modern in make, and Clare, of course, knew it. But modern maidens dally, just as their mothers did, and she parried: "Yes, but that was something about 'after the war'."

But in her heart and look there was another answer. And both of them knew it as they moved away.

\* \* \*

Lend me your ears, my countrymen. For in this tale, so sad, so commonplace, there is a thread of golden truth. What matter if men hate, if nations war, if devils destroy, so long as love lives on ?

Some day the tiny infant yet will be the King and Conqueror so that the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

A toast then to that day ! A toast ! a toast !! to all who love !

## The Agricultural Worker and County Organisation

The coming into his own of the agricultural worker as a result of the recent wage award is a significant fact for parties in rural areas.

We have many times urged such parties and our officers there to lend what aid they could in the organisation of farm workers, and there is no doubt that the sympathy which this particular Union always elicited from many quarters of the Labour Movement has done much to popularise and make possible the victory achieved.

Trade Union organisation among agricultural workers has been slow and difficult building; and poor pay has been at the root of some of these difficulties.

Though the farm worker is by no means over-paid or sufficiently paid even now, we think we see a possibility now of much greater activity for political purposes in rural areas. Trade Unionism does not flourish on poor wages. Recent circumstances are bound to lead to a multiplication of Trade Union branches in the countryside and to the association of these branches with their respective Local and Divisional Labour Parties.

Divisional Parties in rural areas often struggle on with but a few hundred affiliated members. If Trade Unionism is now to grow and develop on the farms an entirely different prospect will result for organising and for winning the Parliamentary seats, also of capturing local Government bodies that hitherto seemed impregnable.

The possibilities we point to will require both tact and organisation to bring to fruition. The Union itself is canny about any attempt to get money out of it as affiliation fees which have not been properly earned, and this is as it should be. Local parties who want the affiliation of the Union branches must win them over first, and also satisfy the Head Office that they themselves have a constitutional Party working on sound lines.

The Union is growing rapidly and we advise D.L.P.s to participate in activities to this end and also in activities in co-operation with the Union branches for the spread of Labour's message once again throughout the countryside.

## Increasing the Affiliated Membership

We always read the Kettering Agent's Monthly Letter to Local Labour Parties and Affiliated Organisations with interest. Here is an extract from the December issue:—

"Once again we are able to report an addition to our affiliated members. This time it is from the Kettering Lodge of the Blastfurnacemen's Trade Union.

"We should also like to mention that within their own Trade Union the Corby Mines Section of the Blastfurnacemen have the highest percentage of men paying the political levy in the country. Actually they provide us with no less than 453 members.

"Plans are on foot to augment the number of affiliated members from the British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association at Corby. I met the Joint Committee and it was decided to issue an invitation to every member who does not pay the political levy to do so. It was also agreed to hold a meeting at which a Member of Parliament will speak with a view to stimulating the efforts of the shop stewards and others. This campaign will take place in the New Year."

The example of Kettering might well be copied. Almost every national Trade Union reports daily increases in membership, and many D.L.P.s could increase their affiliated memberships, and the number of Trade Union representatives on Management Committees, if an effort was made to secure the co-operation of Trade Union Branch Officers as advised so often in the "L.O." Each D.L.P. might well investigate the number of Trade Union Branches *not* yet affiliated, and appoint deputations to meet the Officers of the T.U. Branches to discuss the matter, and also the feasibility of issuing invitations to all non-political members to pay the political levy.

While on this subject we may mention that the Organising Sub-Committee of the Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council has also been active in endeavouring to secure improved affiliation throughout its area. Other bodies, we are glad to say, are also taking this matter up.

## THIS IS PERSONAL

We note that Miss Mabel Crout has been appointed in the place of the late William Barefoot at Woolwich. That this is a well-deserved recognition all will agree. Miss Crout was a loyal colleague with our late friend for over 30 years. There are few women so possessed of the natural tact, ability and courage so necessary in a post of this kind, all which qualities have been well displayed over the gone-by years of loyal partnership.

The London Labour Agents were entertained to tea by Mr. R. Montford, C.C., J.P., on 15th January for the eighth successive year in celebration of what we believe was Mr. Montford's 84th birthday. Mr. Montford is the Financial Secretary of the London District and few men even 20, 30, or 40 years younger display such activity, agility and eagerness in the performance of many public functions. Long, long may these birthday parties be held, if only to celebrate the secret of perpetual youth for one who seems to know it.

Heartiest congratulations to our colleague Mr. George Brett, of Leeds, on whom was recently conferred an O.B.E. Mr. Brett has been since 1926 Labour Agent at North-West Leeds (latterly part time). He has devoted a great measure of his time and leisure to the service of Leeds and for some years has been Labour's leader on the City Council. There his outstanding ability, persuasiveness, and energy have proved a big asset to the Party.

Mr. Will Holmes of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, and a past President of the T.U.C., has been much in the public eye of two hemispheres during the past twelve months. He has now returned from a tremendous tour taken on behalf of the T.U.C. to the Antipodes.

His experiences, written while on tour, have made delightful reading in the "Land-Worker" for some months past. Old readers of the "L. O." will recollect that Mr. Will Holmes was once on the staff of the Labour Party as a National Organiser, he and Sam Higginbottom being the first two appointed to these posts. The Editor

of this journal was later appointed to a similar office and for a period prior to the extension of the staff in 1921 Mr. Holmes and the Editor were the only two Head Office Organisers. Will Holmes was always a genial colleague with a far-seeing mind, and he was an efficient result-producing organiser. He resigned the post in 1926 to become General Secretary of the Union in whose councils he had for many years taken an active part.

Many readers will remember our old friend A. T. Sutton when he was permanent Secretary of the Bradford I.L.P., which office he relinquished in 1931. Recently the Labour Group on the Bradford City Council presented a handsome wireless set and an appreciative resolution inscribed on vellum to Ex-Ald. Sutton on his retirement after 23 years of service as Hon. Secretary of the Labour Group. Those who know anything of the variety, the difficulties, and sometimes the differences on questions of policy, that come before an active Labour Group, will also know something of what 23 years service as Group Secretary has meant. The quiet, behind-the-scenes service of such men as A. T. Sutton has done much to give us the heritage which is our Movement to-day.

## REVIEWS

**"Ten Angels Swearing"**  
(Labour Book Service)

Francis Williams in this book has given expression to something that has troubled the minds of many young and ardent socialists, but he has gone a step further by venturing to suggest ways and means of developing a clearer political consciousness in the minds of "floating voters."

He begins by reminding us of the mass of voters who, in so-called times of crisis, cannot "be bothered to use their votes," and offers some solace to Labour Party members by suggesting our Party is "the most consistently active political party." He refreshes us by pointing out that from a different camp Churchill, Eden and Duff Cooper joined with our Party in protesting against the past twenty-five years of "uniformly disastrous" British foreign policy. He also reminds us that the idea of democracy plays an

important part in our social life, and emphasises that the provision of economic security has yet to be solved by the democracies.

His chapter on the selection of an M.P. may be of interest to non-Party voters, although the ultimate result hardly agrees with our experience in Clay Cross. In this constituency, which is predominantly a mining one, the candidate sponsored by the Derbyshire Miners' Association was unsuccessful at the General Election in 1918, and their nominees were not successful at the Party selection meetings in 1933, 1935, or 1936.

The succeeding chapter dealing with "Parties and People" might well have included some reference to the need for Parliamentary Party members accepting the decisions of their weekly meeting. The reference to the intricacies of finance have been mentioned by most reviewers.

In my view the important pages of the book are those which detail the existing class-system of education, from which our Party members serving on Education Committees might find a jumping off point for amending the existing curriculum. Civics do not appear to find a place in our secondary schools, and in our elementary schools youthful students are expected to interest themselves in history without a knowledge of the principles of government.

On page 109 Mr. Williams erroneously conveys the idea that Local Government elections refer to one-third of the Councillors annually.

There are Parish Councils and Rural District Councils where this does not operate, and what is more, there is no evidence to suggest that the Urban District Councils are any more progressive where the one-third retirement scheme operates, than are the Rural District Councils or the County Councils where it does not. The only difference evident is that of their own difference as regards the powers they possess. Neither is there any evidence of an increased interest on the part of the elector at the polls. As a matter of fact it will be of interest if I recall an instance in 1934, when at the Rural District Council Elections one Electoral Area in this constituency polled 197 votes out of a possible 212.

The Labour Book Service has rendered yeoman service by bringing this

book to the notice of an intelligent section of the electorate, and it is to be hoped that it will direct attention to the need for emphasising what is to be expected of democratic government in times of peace, and so kill the view, which is gaining ground in some quarters, that only in times of war do we have cause to realise the importance of our social services and their need for expansion.

J. W. French (Clay Cross Division.)

## OBITUARY

The sudden death of Mr. Ben Clare, Labour Agent at Clayton, Manchester, who fell dead in the street at the beginning of January came as a shock to his many friends throughout the country. Only two days before we had received a letter from Mr. Clare couched in most cheerful terms and saying his health had greatly improved. Our old comrade, who was 64 last August, had many years of service to his credit in the Labour Movement and was loved and respected on all hands. He had formerly been an Executive Member of the Agents' Union and was closely connected with the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation.

We regret also to announce the death of Mr. W. T. Harris at the advanced age of 71. Mr. Harris had up to two or three years ago been Agent at Edmonton under the Co-operative Party auspices, and earlier had held Labour Agencies at several places. For some time he had been in failing health and his many friends and acquaintances throughout the country will mark his passing with many regrets.

Yet another loss which it is our painful duty to record is that of Ald. Walter Morris, who for a period of 21 years was Labour Agent at Preston. Mr. Morris retired a few years ago and since then had thrown himself fully into public life. He would have been 65 this coming March. His work, both as an organiser and administrator (he had been the Mayor of Preston on two occasions) remains behind, and is a tribute to a man of quiet manner, strong convictions and great determination in the work he undertook.